

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 017303

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ORIGIN COME-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, GR

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY STAY OF BEIRUT RTDO

REF: STATE 256786

1) STATE/USDOC HAVE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE RELOCATION OF THE REGIONAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (RTDO) FROM BEIRUT TO ANOTHER CITY IN THE NEAR EAST. CAIRO HAD BEEN ORIGINALLY SELECTED AS THE MOST LOGICAL SITE PARTICULARLY BECAUSE IT PHYSICALLY PLACED THE RTDO IN AN ARAB COUNTRY. HOWEVER THIS LOCATION IS NOT OPEN TO US AT THIS TIME. THEREFORE, A NUMBER OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES HAVE BEEN STUDIED BUT AMONG THOSE AVAILABLE NONE OFFER THE SAME EXTENT OF EMBASSY SUPPORT AND COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS AVAILABLE IN ATHENS. ALSO, IT APPEARS THAT IN ATHENS THE SERVICES OF THE RTDO WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO THE LARGEST NUMBER OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN VISITING THE NEAR EAST AT THE PRESENT TIME AND WOULD BE SERVICING THE LARGEST NUMBER

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PAGE 02 STATE 017303

OF DISPLACED U.S. FIRMS. IN ADDITION, THE COMMERCIAL TRANS-

PORTATION AND COMMUNICATION AVAILABLE IN ATHENS WOULD PROVIDE A GOOD BASE FROM WHICH THE EXTENSIVE PLANNED TRAVEL OF RTDO OFFICERS COULD BE PROGRAMMED. WE ANTICIPATE THAT NORMALLY ONLY ONE OFFICER WOULD BE PRESENT IN ATHENS AT A TIME, DUE TO THE HEAVY TRAVEL SCHEDULE IN SUPPORT OF TRADE

PROMOTION ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE AREA. THE RTDO IS COMPLETELY FUNDED FROM EXISTING APPROPRIATIONS.

2) SINCE THE CONCLUSION HAS BEEN REACHED THAT THE RTDO COULD OPERATE MOST EFFECTIVELY BY REMAINING IN ATHENS, THRU JUNE 30, 1976, EMBASSY APPROVAL WOULD BE APPRECIATED FOR THE TEMPORARY TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT OF JAMES LEFEAVER, DIRECTOR, RTDO, AND EDWARD KINNEAR, DEPUTY, RTDO, TO ATHENS. SISCO

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